

McCarthy Creek

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve

National Park Service
US Department of the Interior



Access: Trail begins in McCarthy

Distance: 10 miles round trip to the first tunnel

Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult

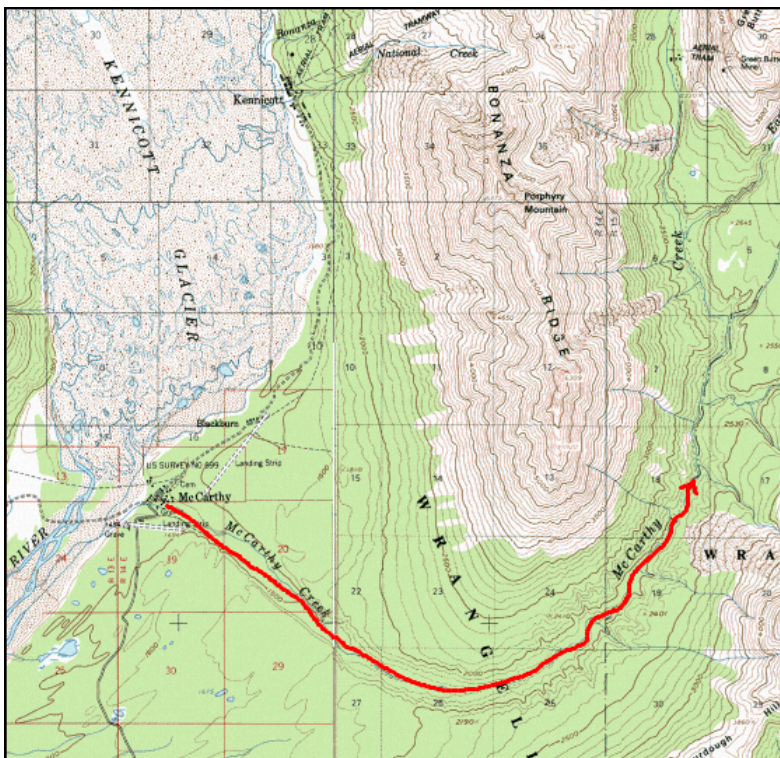
Highlights: Scenery, solitude, easy access

Description:

To access McCarthy Creek walk through town on the main road, pass the historic hardware store. When the road ends, turn left onto a short trail to the river. Cross McCarthy Creek via a small log footbridge. Climb up the bank to a gravel road and turn left. Almost immediately you will see the burial site of “Whiskey,” (a dog) within a white picket fence. The trail along the creek begins here.



After about three miles the river has washed out the route. Walk up and over the slump paralleling the creek to avoid crossing the river. Find the trail at “5-mile cabin” (about 4 miles from the McCarthy Creek footbridge) between an old cabin and the area where the original route crossed the river. You will need to cross the creek at this point or turn around. Please note that McCarthy Creek is possible to cross at low water but may be very dangerous at higher water volumes. Use your best judgment and turn around here if necessary. From this point folded and faulted dikes in the rock face are visible. If you chose to cross the creek continue about 300 yards where you will cross back. Shortly thereafter the trail leads you through an original tunnel left from the mining era. Return via the same route.



Note:

If continuing on into the upper reaches of the McCarthy Creek drainage please be aware that private property exists. Please respect private property by not trespassing. Hikers planning multiple day backpacking trips in this area should seek additional information regarding private property locations.

Potential Hazards:

- Floods frequently wash out portions of this route. Use your best judgment regarding safety and current conditions.
- Creek crossing can be very hazardous at high water volumes. Be prepared to turn back early if necessary.